W44.

ABSOLUTE *Predestination* Not SCRIPTURAL:

Or some QUERIES

Upon a Doctrine which I heard Preach'd 1704. to a People call'd *Independents*, at *Cockermouth* in *Cumberland*, viz. *That the Covenant and Decree were made between God and Christ from Eternity*, concerning *Man's* Predestination, *or* Election; *and that those whom God was pleas'd to make Choice of then, must be Sav'd, Man having no Hand therein.*

The plain Consequence of which DOCTRINE is, That those who were not then Elected, cannot possibly be Sav'd; but by an Absolute Decree of *Reprobation*, or *Non-Election*, must unavoidably perish, notwithstanding all that Christ hath Done and Suffer'd, and is doing by his Grace and Holy Spirit for the Salvation of Mankind.

By JANE FEARON.

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GALERIES

TO THE READER.

THAT *which is chiefly aimed at in Proposing these following* QUERIES, *is, First, to Assert the Honour and Glory of the Holy Omnipotent* GOD; *who was by Himself Proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord* GOD, *Merciful and Gracious, Long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth; keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity, and Transgression, and Sin,* &c. Exod. 34. 6, & 7. *But whether it be to Honour* GOD, *by the presenting Him as Author of all the Sin and Iniquity*

of all Kinds that have been committed ſince the Foundation of the World; I leave to the unprejudiced Reader to judge: For if GOD *hath Decreed whatever cometh to paſs, as this Doctrine ſuggeſts, how can it be otherwiſe?*

Secondly, *To manifeſt my Duty and Love to my Neighbours; hoping it will be readily granted, we are not under the Law, but under Grace; (according as it is written, The Law was given by* Moſes, *but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt,* John 1. 17.) *and therefore ought to come further than the Levitical Law, wherein it was written,* Thou ſhalt not ſee thy Brothers Ox or his Sheep go aſtray, *&c. Deut.* 22. 1. *But how much is a Man*

better than an Ox or Sheep; being the Soul of Man is Immortal, and muſt either be Capable of Joy and Felicity, or Wo and Miſery, World without End? And therefore I dare not ſew Pillows under the Arm-holes of any, nor deal with Flattery, nor fear the Frowns of ſuch as I am engag'd with; knowing if I ſtrive to pleaſe Men, I ſhall not be the Servant of Chriſt.

Thirdly, *To clear my own Soul of the Blood of ſuch, by giving them warning, according to the Saying of the Lord to the Prophet,* If thou warn the Wicked of his way, to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, He ſhall Die in his Iniquity, but thou haſt delivered thy Soul, *Ezek.* 33. 9.

To the Reader.

When I undertook to write, I did intend Brevity, but could not Compoſe it ſo ſhort as I deſired, and be intelligible in the Matter; but if the Reader do but ſeriouſly conſider, the greateſt part is Scripture, and worthy to be obſerv'd, and which we ought to have a Reverend Eſteem of, in general, but more eſpecially of that which was ſpoken by GOD, *and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with the Sayings of the Prophets; and the Doctrine of the Apoſtles, who underſtood the Mind of Chriſt; and as in Seriouſneſs it is* READ, *and Prejudice kept out, ſo it may be of Benefit: Which is the ſincere Deſire of a Lover of the Souls of all Men.*

JANE FEARON.

Some

Some QUERIES, &c.

QUERY I.

SEeing God was pleased in the Beginning to Create *Adam* in the likeness of himself, and place him in the Garden of *Eden*, in a State of Innocency, Holiness, Purity and Wisdom, that he could give Names to all Cattle, and to the Fowls of the Air, and to every Beast of the Field, according to their Natures; and God saw all that he had made, was very Good, and he gave Mankind Dominion over the works of his hands; as the *Psalmist*, speaking of the dignity wherein Man was placed, in the admiration of Gods great Goodness to Man, saith, *Thou hast Crowned him with Glory and Honour; Thou madest him to have Dominion over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things under his Feet*, Psal. 8. 5, 6. Now, whether was *Adam*'s Loss and Fall, by reason

of Gods Abſolute Decree from Eternity, or by reaſon of his own Tranſgreſſion? If it ſhould be ſaid, By reaſon of God's Abſolute Decree; how doth it contradict God's Sentence pronounced upon him, *Gen* 3. 17. *Becauſe thou haſt hearkened to the voice of thy Wife, and haſt eaten of the Tree of which I commanded thee, ſaying, Thou ſhalt not eat of it?*

QUERY 2. Whether *Cain* had not a day of Viſitation given him of God, and conditionally acceptance with him? According to that ſaying by the Lord unto him, *Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doſt well thou ſhalt be accepted,* (look in the old Tranſlation) *but if thou doſt not well, Sin lyeth at the door,* Gen. 4. 6, 7. Now if we ſay, the acceptance is by an Eternal Abſolute Decree, and not in the well-doing, is not this to contradict God himſelf, and conſequently no leſs than Blaſphemy?

QUERY 3. Whether *Eſau* was rejected by an Eternal Abſolute Decree, before he ſold his Birthright? Seeing the Apoſtle ſaith, *For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected;*

jected; for he found no place of Repentance, though he ſought it carefully with tears, Heb. 12. 17. Now perhaps I ſhall here meet with an Objection, becauſe it was ſaid unto *Rebecca*, The *Elder ſhall ſerve the younger; as it is written*, Jacob *have I Loved, and* Eſau *have I hated*, *Rom.* 9. 12, 13. But why *Eſau* was hated, read *Obadiah* the firſt Chap. and 10. v. *For thy violence againſt thy brother* Jacob, *ſhame ſhall cover thee, and thou ſhalt be cut off for ever*: That Sentence, *Jacob have I loved, and Eſau have I hated*, was written by *Malachi*, long after this time; but that which was ſpoken of them before they were born, was, *the Elder ſhall ſerve the Younger*; which ſentence may alſo be taken *Allegorically*, relating to the Firſt and Second Birth ſpoken of to *Nicodemus* by our Bleſſed Lord, *John* 3. 5. viz. *Verily, Verily I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*; and ſeeing Chriſt our Lord layeth the whole ſtreſs of entring into the Kingdom of God, upon being born again *of the Second Birth*, well might it be ſaid, *The Elder ſhall ſerve the Younger*, or the firſt Nature give way to the Second; ſeeing that by the former *we are all Children of wrath*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *even as others*, Eph. 2. 3. So

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while Mankind remaineth in this, he is in the ſtate of Reprobation; but when the firſt Nature or Birth giveth place to the ſecond, and Mankind comes to be born again of that Seed that's *Incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. 1. 23. He's in a State of Election, and loved of God, which anſwers to that ſentence, *Jacob have I loved*, &c. And likewiſe as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh concerning *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*, *which things*, ſaith he, *are an Allegory*, for *theſe are the two Covenants*; the *one from Mount* Sinai, *which Gendreth to Bondage*, which is Agar &c. *but* Jeruſalem *which is above is free*, which is *the Mother of us all*, Gal. 4. 24, 26. which (alſo) relates to the ſecond Birth, and that we ſhould all be born of, if the Children of Election or Promiſe; but as the Apoſtle ſaid, *As then, he that was born after the fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit; even ſo it is now, nevertheleſs what ſaith the Scripture? Caſt out the bond-woman and her Son, for the Son of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir with the Son of the free-woman*, verſ. 29, 30. Which is as much as to ſay, The Firſt Nature in which we are Children of Wrath, cannot be Heir of the Kingdom of God; but ſuch as know the ſecond to have Dominion, which is that freedom

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and Liberty, the ſame Apoſtle exhorted the *Galatians* ſtand faſt in, ſaying, wherewith here *Chriſt hath made us free*, Gal. 5. 1. Perhaps I may alſo meet with an Objection, becauſe it was ſaid unto Pharaoh, *For this cauſe have I raiſed thee up, for to ſhew in thee my Power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the Earth*, *Exod.* 9. 16. but wherefore it was ſo ſaid, may be ſeen in *Exod.* 3. 7, 8. 9. viz. *And the Lord ſaid, I have ſurely ſeen the affliction of my People which are in* Egypt, *and have heard their cry, by reaſon of their Task-maſters; for I know their ſorrows, and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and I have alſo ſeen the oppreſſion wherewith the Egyptians oppreſs them*; and *Moſes* and *Aaron* were ſent unto *Pharaoh*, to declare God's Mind concerning his People; but when he would not hearken unto them, but ſaid, *Who is the Lord, that I ſhould obey his Voice, to let Iſrael go? I Know not the Lord, neither will I let Iſrael go: Exod.* 5. 2. When he would not hearken to the Lord nor obey his Voice, then his heart was hardned, as the Lord ſaid, *I will harden Pharaoh's heart*, which is the future Tenſe, or the time which is to come, and therefore not from Eternity.

QUERY

QUERY 4. Whether was it by an Eternal Abſolute Decree, that *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were deſtroyed? Seeing the Lord ſaid *Becauſe the cry of* Sodom *and* Gomorah *is great, and becauſe their Sin is very grievous, I will go down now and ſee whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it*, &c. *Gen.* 18. 20, 21. And altho' he found their Sin grievous, yet through *Abrahams* interceſſion he would have ſpared *Sodom*, with it's Inhabitants, if there had been but ten righteous Perſons in it; and ſurely if there had been any Abſolute Decree from Eternity for their Deſtruction, God would have made it known to *Abraham*, and when he ſo reverently interceded for them, would rather have told him, I have Decreed their Deſtruction, than ſo far have condeſcended to him, till it came to the number of ten righteous Perſons; ſeeing the Lord ſaid, *Shall I hide from* Abraham, *that thing which I do?* v. 17.

QUERY 5. Why ſhould the Lord give his People conditional acceptance with him, as may be underſtood by calling unto *Moſes* out of the Mountain, ſaying, *Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the Houſe of Jacob, and tell the Chil-*

Children of Iſrael, *Ye have ſeen what I did unto the* Egyptians, *and how I bare you as on Eagles Wings, and brought you unto my Self; now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my Covenant, then ye ſhall be a peculiar treaſure unto me?* Exod. 19. 3, 4, 5. So they entred into Covenant with the Lord, and ſaid, *All that the Lord hath ſpoken, we will do:* v. 8. Notwithſtanding they rebelled againſt him, and their Carcaſſes fell in the Wilderneſs, and therefore whether was it by An Eternal Abſolute Decree; or becauſe of their rebellion? If by an Eternal Abſolute Decree, how by this Doctrine do they make God the greateſt of Diſſemblers, *viz.* To make a Covenant with his People, concerning that which he made Impoſſible for them to have the benefit of?

QUERY 6. Whether *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*'s Deſtruction, was becauſe of their rebellion, or becauſe it was Abſolutely decreed from Eternity? If it ſhould be ſaid, Becauſe it was Abſolutely decreed from Eternity; how doth that contradict *Moſes*, who ſaid, *If theſe men Die the common Death of all men,* &c. *then the Lord hath not ſent me; but if the Lord make a new thing, and the Earth open her mouth and Swallow them up, with all*

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that appertain to them, and they go down quick into the Pit, then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord, Num. 16. 29, 30. which they could not do from Eternity, before they had a being.

QUERY 7. Wherefore should *Moses* say to the Children of Israel? *I call Heaven and Earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing, therefore choose Life, that both thou and thy Seed may Live, that thou mayest Love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and cleave unto Him,* &c. *Deut.* 30. 19, 20. Now we see upon such and such Conditions, they might have had Life, and the Blessing; otherwise Death, and the Curse was to be their Portion: Why should *Moses* say, *Choose Life,* if it had been Impossible for them to choose it? and if their destruction had been Absolutely Decreed from Eternity, it would have been impossible, according to this Doctrine.

QUERY 8. Moreover when *Moses* had told them what curses should befall them, like the overthrow of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah,* as may be read at large in *Deut.* 29 *Chap.* So that the Nations should say, *Where-*

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fore hath the Lord done thus unto this Land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? *then men ſhall ſay, becauſe they have forſaken the Covenant of the Lord God of their Fathers,* &c. v. 24, 25. But if it was Abſolutely Decreed from Eternity, might it not rather be ſaid, it was no deſert of theirs, they could no way avoid it, God's Abſolute Decree from Eternity brought it upon them; [Mark] how by this Doctrine Man's Deſtruction is laid upon God, Contrary to the ſaying of the Lord by the Prophet (*viz.*) *O Iſrael thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf, but in me is thy help,* Hoſ. 13. 9.

QUERY 9. Why ſhould *Joſhua* when he was near to draw his laſt breath, thus direct his Speech to the Children of Iſrael, and ſay, *Behold this day I am going the way of all the Earth, and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your Souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God hath ſpoken concerning you, all are come to paſs unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof; therefore it ſhall come to paſs, that as all good things are come upon you, which the Lord your God promiſed you; So ſhall the Lord bring upon you all evil things, until he hath deſtroyed you,* &c. *Joſh.* 23. 14, 15.

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The firſt was upon the Condition that they took good heed to their ſelves, and that they loved the Lord their God; and the latter when they tranſgreſſed the Covenant of the Lord their God, and ſerved other Gods; *Joſhua* although filled with the Spirit of Wiſdom and Courage, and had ſuch acceſs to the Throne of God, as at his requeſt the Sun ſtood ſtill for the ſpace of a whole day, he did not tell the Children of *Iſrael*, firſt, That it was becauſe they were of the number of Gods Elect, from all Eternity, ſurely if it had been ſo, God would have made it known to him, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things; and Secondly, that they were not of the Elect, but of that number that were under Eternal Reprobation, that all the Evil things ſhould come upon them; for according to this Doctrine, they muſt be one while this, and another that, unleſs they would deny *Joſhua*'s dying Words; who told the People how they might Chuſe the good, and eſchew the evil, but if it was impoſſible by God's Abſolute Decree, to chuſe good, *&c.* Then *Joſhua*'s Exhortation was in vain?

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QUERY 10. Why ſhould *Deborah* thus ſay in her Song, *Curſe ye Meroz (ſaid the Angel of the Lord) curſe ye bitterly the Inhabitants thereof, becauſe they came not to the help of the Lord againſt the mighty*, Judges 5. 23. if it was ſo decreed that they could not? Was it not hard meaſure to be ſo bitterly Curſed, for not doing that which was impoſſible? And according to this Doctrine it was ſo.

QUERY 11. What was the reaſon that *Hannah* ſhould thus ſay, *The Lord is a God, of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed?* 1 Sam. 2. 3. and doth not rather ſay, he taketh no notice of the actions of mankind, whether good or bad? for according to this Doctrine it cannot be otherwiſe: And how doth this alſo lead into a diſſolute life, void of true fear, or down into deſpair? I have ſeen the man that was under exerciſe of mind for the good of his Soul, and amongſt others he went to hear Sermons, and he heard one hold forth for Doctrine, *That, ſuch as belong to the Election of Grace, ſhould be pluckt as a Brand out of the Fire, or as with a three-fold Cord*; believing ſuch Doctrine, he run into a diſſolute Life; and one took

Notice of it to be worſe than before, and ſpake to him concerning it; and told him of the time when it was better with him; and his Reply was, *If God will have me, let him fetch me with a threefold Cord*; in as much as there was no need for him to be concern'd; and if he ſhould, it would be to no purpoſe; now whether the Doctrine of this Preacher did not ſome way occaſion the poor Man's Diſſoluteneſs and deſperate Reſolution, deſerves to be conſider'd.

QUERY 12. Is not this Doctrine of Abſolute Reprobation, contrary to the Meſſage that the Man of God came with to old *Eli*, in the Name of the Lord? 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. *For them that Honour me, I will Honour; and they that deſpiſe me, ſhall be lightly eſteemed.*

QUERY 13. Wherefore ſhould *David* ſay, *The Lord rewarded me according to my Righteouſneſs, according to the Cleanneſs of my Hands, hath he recompenſed me?* 2 Sam. 22. 1. And doth not rather ſay, Becauſe of God's Abſolute Decree from Eternity he hath rewarded me?

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QUERY 14. Now if there had been ſuch a Decree, why ſhould *David* ſo command his Son *Solomon* to keep *The Charge of the Lord his God, to walk in his ways, to keep his Statutes and his Commandments, &c. That the Lord may continue his Word which he ſpake concerning me, ſaying, If thy Children take heed to their way to walk before me in Truth, with all their Heart, and with all their Soul, there ſhall not fail thee a Man one the Throne of Iſrael?* 1 Kings 2. 3, 4. May we not ſee here that the Lord promiſed it upon Condition, but the Condition was not obſerved; ſo whether muſt the Fault have been, on Gods part or Mans, if there was ſuch an abſolute Decree before Man had a Being, that he ſhould tranſgreſs? By this is not God made the Author of Mans Tranſgreſſion, and what leſs can that be than Blaſphemy?

QUERY 15. And whether was *Ahab*'s Deſtruction pronounced upon him, 1 *Kings* 21. by reaſon of the Eternal Decree, or becauſe he had ſo highly provoked the Lord, in the matter of *Naboth*? If it ſhould be ſaid, Becauſe God had de-

creed he ſhould do ſo wickedly, that he might deſtroy him; how doth this Doctrine make God the Author of *Naboth*'s Murther; and not only *Naboth*'s, but of all the Murther and Blood-ſhed from *Abel*? Wherefore muſt *Ahab* be Puniſhed, for that he could no way avoid? Oh! my Soul come not thou into their Secret, neither take hold of their Paths, who teach ſuch Doctrine.

QUERY 16. Now if there had been ſuch an Abſolute Decree from Eternity, why would *David* have expreſſed himſelf on this wiſe; *And thou* Solomon, *my Son, know thou the God of thy Father, and ſerve him with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind; for the Lord ſearcheth all Hearts, and underſtandeth all the Imaginations of the Thoughts; if thou ſeek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forſake him, he will caſt thee off for ever*, 1 Chron. 28. 9. Now if the Acceptance was by the Decree before-mention'd, what need was there for *David* ſo to command his Son, and ſo plainly ſhew upon what Conditions God would be found of him?

QUERY 17. If there had been ſuch an Abſolute Decree, why did *The Spirit of*

of God come upon Azariah; ſo that *he went out to meet* Aſa, *and ſaid unto him, Hear ye me,* Aſa, *and all* Judah *and* Benjamin, *the Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye ſeek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forſake him, he will forſake you?* 2 Chron. 15. 1, 2. Now whether is Man's Deſtruction by an Eternal abſolute Decree, or for want of ſeeking the Lord, ſeeing he will be found of thoſe that ſeek him? And likewiſe did not *Ezra* confirm it in theſe Words; *The hand of our God is upon all them for good that ſeek him, but his Power and his Wrath is againſt all them that forſake him?* (And ſaid he) *So we faſted and beſought our God for this, and he was intreated of us,* Ezra 8. 22, 23. Now if it had been Abſolutely Decreed from Eternity, what need of ſo much Faſting and ſeeking God? And alſo *Nehemiah* ſaid on this wiſe unto the Lord, *Remember, I beſeech thee, the Word thou commandeſt thy Servant* Moſes, *ſaying, If ye tranſgreſs, I will ſcattter you abroad among the Nations; but if ye turn unto me, and keep my Commandments, and do them, tho' there were of you caſt out unto the uttermoſt part of the Heaven, yet will I gather them from*

 thence,

thence, and will bring them into the Place that I have choſen to ſet my Name there, Neh. 1. 8, 9. May not we ſee that there are always Conditions required, which if obſerved, Men are accepted of God; and if not obſerved, they are rejected? Where's then the Abſolute Decree?

QUERY 18. Whether that Decree the Pſalmiſt ſpoke of, doth not ſignifie God's Univerſal Love to Mankind? *viz. I will declare the Decree, The Lord hath ſaid unto me, Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee; ask of me, and I ſhall give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the Earth for thy Poſſeſſion,* Pſal. 2. 7, 8. Now if the Heathen are given for an Inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the Earth for a Poſſeſſion, to the Son of God. Where's then the Number that's Abſolutely Decreed from Eternity for Damnation?

QUERY 19. Whether the Saying of the Wiſe Man doth not ſignifie Gods Univerſal Love to Mankind? *viz. Wiſdom cryeth without, ſhe uttereth her Voice in the Streets:*

Streets: She cryeth in the chief Place of Concourſe, in the openings of the Gates, in the City ſhe uttereth her Words, ſaying; How long, ye Simple ones, will ye love Simplicity, and the Scorners Delight in Scorning, and Fools hate Knowledge? Turn you at my Reproof, behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my Words unto you, Prov. 1. 20, 21, 22, 23. Now if the Simple, and the Scorners, and the Fools, upon Condition of Turning at the Voice of Wiſdom, had the Promiſe of the Pouring forth of the Spirit, which undoubtedly was able to work a Change in their Hearts, according to the Saying of the Prophet, when *the Spirit ſhall be poured upon us from on high, the Wilderneſs* ſhall become *a fruitful Field*, &c. Iſa. 32. 15. Where's then the Number that's abſolutely decreed from Eternity for Damnation? But if it ſhould be objected, Although Wiſdom did cry to the very worſt of Men, as it appears; yet ſuch as were Abſolutely predeſtinated to Damnation, could not turn at her Reproof; would not this render God a hard Maſter, and alſo a Mocker of ſuch as Wiſdom called to, as firſt to make it impoſſible by his Abſo-

lute Decree, and then call to them to do that which he had made impoſſible?

QUERY 20. Why ſhould the Wiſe Man ſay, *Let us hear the Concluſion of the whole Matter, Fear God and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole Duty of Man. For God ſhall bring every Work into Judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil?* Eccleſ. 12. 13, 14. For if God by his Abſolutely Decree has made it impoſſible for the greateſt part of Mankind to fear him, and keep his Commandments, and yet will bring every *Work* to Judgment, whether Good or Evil, would not this alſo render him unmerciful; to bring ſuch under Judgment from doing Evil, to whom he made it impoſſible to do good, or to fear him, and keep his Commandments?

QUERY 21. And again, do not the Words of the Prophet *Iſaiah* prove God's Univerſal Love to Mankind? *viz. It is a light thing that thou ſhouldeſt be my Servant, to raiſe up the Tribes of* Jacob, *and to reſtore the preſerved of* Iſrael; *I will alſo give thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that thou mayſt be my Salvation unto the*

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ends of the Earth, Isa. 49. 6. And if Christ is for Salvation to the Ends of the Earth; as *Isaiah* saith in another Place, *Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the Earth*, &c. Isa. 45. 22. Where is the Number that's Absolutely Decreed from Eternity for Damnation?

QUERY 22. If it had been absolutely decreed from Eternity, wherefore should the Prophet *Jeremiah* be commanded by the Lord, to proclaim the Desolation of the *Jews* for their Sins, and say, *Hear ye the Word of the Lord, O Kings of* Judah, *and Inhabitants of* Jerusalem, *Thus saith the Lord of* Hosts, the God of Israel, *Behold, I will bring Evil upon this Place, the which whosoever heareth, his Ears shall tingle; because they have forsaken me*, (mark, then not because of an Absolute Decree from Eternity) *and filled this Place with the Blood of Innocents; they have built also the high Places of Baal, to burn their Sons with Fire, for Burnt-Offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my Mind*, Jer. 19. 3, 4, 5. Now by this doth it not appear, that God never decreed the Burning of their Sons, although it came to pass; but according

cording to this Abſolute Predeſtinarian Doctrine, how is God made Guilty of the Blood of theſe poor Innocents, notwithſtanding he had declared by his Prophet, he commanded it not, nor ſpake it, neither came it into his Mind?

QUERY 23. Moreover how is that Saying of the Prophet *Ezekiel*, contradictory to that Doctrine of abſolute Reprobation? *viz. Say unto them, As I Live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no Pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way and Live*, Ezek. 33. 11. Now is there any thing more certain than that God liveth? And therefore will it not follow, ſo certain it is that he delighteth not in the Death of the Wicked?

QUERY 24. Furthermore whether God, who is long-ſuffering, gracious, ſlow to Anger, and full of Mercy, is not rendred by this Doctrine leſs Merciful than *Nebuchadnezzar*? who although he caſt the Servants of the Moſt High God into the Fire, yet he commanded them firſt to be brought before him, and ſaid unto them, *Is it true, O* Shadrach, Meſhach, *and* Abednego? *Do ye not ſerve my Gods, nor worſhip*

worſhip the Golden Image, which I have ſet up? Now if ye be ready, that at what time ye hear the Sound of the Cornet, Flute, Harp, Sackbut, Pſaltery and Dulcimer, and all kinds of Muſick, ye fall down and worſhip the Image, which I have made, well; but if ye worſhip not, ye ſhall be caſt the ſame Hour into the Midſt of a Burning Fiery Furnace, &c. Dan. 3. 14, 15. Here we may ſee he made Enquiry at their own Mouths, whether the Report he had heard of them was true, yea or nay; and then offer'd them Conditions, whereby they might eſcape the caſting into the burning fiery Furnace; whereas Man hath no Conditions offer'd him, according to this Doctrine, in order to his Eſcaping Eternal Miſery, but muſt be for ever tormented, for not doing that which he was never able to do?

QUERY 25. Why ſhould the Prophet *Hoſea* ſay, *Hear ye the Word of the Lord, ye Children of* Iſrael: *For the Lord hath a Controverſy with the Inhabitants of the Land, becauſe there is no Truth, nor Mercy, nor Knowledge of God, in the Land,* Hoſ. 4. 1. If God had Abſolutely Decreed (it) from Eternity that it ſhould be ſo? Wherefore ſhould his Controverſie be with them, if they

they could not do what he required of them?

QUERY 26. And again, why did the Prophet *Joel* ſay, *Rent your Hearts, and not your Garments, and turn to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, ſlow to Anger, and of great Kindneſs*, &c. Joel 1. 13. For if they were not in a Capacity to turn unto the Lord, the Prophet's Exhortation was in vain.

QUERY 27. What was the Reaſon the Prophet *Amos* ſaid to the Children of *Iſrael, Seek the Lord and ye ſhall live, leaſt he break out like Fire in the Houſe of* Joſeph, *and devour it, and there be none to quench it in* Bethel, Amos 5. 6. If it was Abſolutely Decreed, that they could not ſeek him, that they might live?

QUERY 28. Why did the Lord threaten *Eſau*, ſaying, *For the Violence againſt thy Brother* Jacob, *Shame ſhall cover thee, and thou ſhalt be cut off for ever*, if that had not been the Cauſe? As may be ſeen in *Obadiah*, Ver. 10.

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QUERY 29. Why ſhould *Jonah* give this as a Reaſon for his Fleeing to *Tarſhiſh*, when he ſhould have gone to *Nineveh*, which God ſpared upon Repentance, ſaying to the Lord, *I knew that thou art a gracious God, Merciful, ſlow to Anger, and of great Kindneſs, and repenteſt thee of the Evil*, John 4. 1. If Man muſt be puniſh'd by an Abſolute Decree from Eternity; before he had a Being, or could ſin againſt the Lord?

QUERY 30. Wherefore did the Prophet ſay, *He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is Good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do Juſtly, and love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Micah 6. 8. If it were impoſſible for the greateſt part of Mankind to attain unto this? Why ſhould God require it, if he had not put Man in a Capacity of doing it? Should we not account it Injuſtice even in Men, if they ſhould command us to do that, which they know we have no Power to perform?

QUERY 31. Furthermore why ſhould the Prophet ſay, *The Lord is ſlow to Anger*

ger (if it were not ſo) *and great in Power, and will not at all acquit the Wicked*, Nah. 1. 3. If he hath no Regard to the Doings of Mankind, as according to this Doctrine, he hath not, but only to his own Abſolute Decree from Eternity?

QUERY 32. Moreover why did the Prophet *Habakkuk* ſay, *I will ſtand upon my Watch, and ſet me upon the Tower, and will Watch to ſee what he will ſay unto me, and what* I *ſhall Anſwer, when* I *am reproved*, Hab 2. 1. And not rather ſay, if I be one that's Predeſtinated to Life, I need do nothing but what I pleaſe, be it Good or Bad, it cannot alter Gods Abſolute Decree; and if I be of that Number that's for Damnation, let my Diligence and Seeking be what it will, it will avail me nothing?

QUERY 33. Why was it ſaid, *It ſhall come to paſs, at the time that I will ſearch* Jeruſalem *with Candles, and puniſh the Men that are ſettled on their Lees, that ſay in their Heart, the Lord will not do Good, neither will he do Evil; therefore their Goods ſhall become a Booty, and their Houſes a Deſolation, and I will bring Diſtreſs upon*

upon Men, that they ſhall walk like Blind Men, becauſe they have ſinned againſt the Lord, and their Blood ſhall be poured out as Duſt, and their Fleſh as the Dung, neither their Silver, nor their Gold, ſhall be able to deliver them in the Day of the Lords Wrath, Zeph. 1. 12, 13, 17, 18. Was it not becauſe they had ſinned againſt the Lord, that this Diſtreſs was to come upon them? Therefore where is the Abſolute Decree?

QUERY 34. Wherefore did the Prophet *Haggai* call Gods People to conſider, what Circumſtances they were under, and ſay, *Ye have Sown much, and bring in little, ye eat, but have not enough; ye drink, but are not filled with drink; ye cloath you, but there is none warm, ye looked for much, and* ſo, *it came to little, and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it: Why, Saith the Lord of Hoſts? Becauſe of mine Houſe that is waſte,* Hag. 1. 6, 9. Was it Gods Decree that his Houſe ſhould lie waſte, that his People might be puniſhed? For according to this Predeſtinarian Doctrine, hath not God decreed, what ever cometh to paſs?

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QUERY 35. Why did the Angel of the Lord ſay unto *Joſhua*, *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my Charge, then thou ſhalt alſo judge my Houſe, and ſhalt alſo keep my Courts, and I will give thee Places to walk among thoſe that ſtand by*? Zech. 3. 7. May we not ſee that it was upon Condition, that *Joſhua* was to be accepted of God, and to have ſuch a great Place, as to judge his Houſe? But if acceptance had been by an Abſolute Decree, might not *Joſhua* have had it for ever, without any Conditions?

QUERY 36. What was the Reaſon that the Prophet *Zechariah*, exhorted Gods People in the Name of the Lord, ſaying, *Execute true Judgment, and ſhew Mercy and Compaſſions every Man to his Brother, and oppreſs not the Widow, nor the Fatherleſs, nor the Stranger, nor the Poor, and let none of you imagine evil againſt his Brother in your Heart: But they refuſed to hearken; and pulled away the Shoulder, and ſtopped their Ears, that they ſhould not hear; yea, they made their Hearts as an Adamant Stone*, &c. *Therefore came a*

great

great Wrath from the Lord of Hoſts. Therefore it is come to paſs that as he cried, and they would not hear; ſo they cried and I would not hear, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, Zech. 7. 9. 10, 11, 12, 13. Now if it was becauſe that they obeyed not the Voice of the Lord, by the Prophet, that the great Wrath came upon them, as is before expreſs'd; then it was not becauſe of any Abſolute Decree, for God is more Righteous, more Merciful, and more Juſt, than to bring Wrath upon Men, for that which they could in no wiſe avoid; and if it was Abſolutely decreed from Eternity, how could they ſhun it?

QUERY 37. Moreover why did the Prophet *Malachy* ſay? *Now, O ye Prieſts, this Commandment is for you: If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to Heart, to give Glory unto my Name, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, I will even ſend a Curſe upon you, and I will Curſe your Bleſſings*; yea, I *have Curſed them already, becauſe ye do not lay it to Heart*, Mal. 2. 1, 2. Now whether they were Curſed, becauſe they did not give Glory to the Lord's Name, nor let it take Impreſſion upon them, that they might keep his

Covenant? or becauſe of an Abſolute Decree from Eternity? If any ſay by an Abſolute Decree, do not they contradict God himſelf, and the Prophet, who ſpake in the Name of the Lord?

QUERY 38. Doth not this Predeſtinarian Doctrine make the Coming of Chriſt void, and his Prayers, Sermons and Exhortations ineffectual to a great part of Mankind? For if Men be of the Number that's elected Abſolutely to Salvation; what need have they to regard any of theſe, but go on in what the Fleſh moſt delights in; but if they are predeſtinated to Damnation, it is neither Chriſt's Coming, Sermons or Prayer, Death, Reſurrection, or Aſcenſion, will do them any good; for according to the Doctrine of Abſolute Predeſtination, the Decree muſt ſtand, whether for Salvation or Damnation.

QUERY. 39. Whether the Man that came to Jeſus, and ask'd him, *Good Maſter, what ſhall I do, that I may inherit Eternal Life*, Mark 10. 17. was hindred becauſe of God's Abſolute Decree, or becauſe he did not obſerve the Conditions, upon which Chriſt promiſed it to him, viz.

viz. *By Selling what he had, and giving it to the Poor, and taking up his Croſs and following Chriſt?* If we ſay by an Abſolute Decree, do not we pervert Chriſt's Words, who told him (*viz.* the Man) that he might have Treaſure in Heaven, if he obſerved the Conditions aforeſaid?

QUERY 40. Why did the Angel declare the Birth and Coming of Chriſt, to the Shepherds? *Luke* 2. 10. *Behold, I bring you good Tydings of great Joy, which ſhall be to all People,* &c. And why did Old *Simeon* likewiſe confirm it, when *the Holy Ghoſt was upon him,* and *he came by the Spirit into the Temple,* verſ. 25, 27. with theſe Words, *Lord, now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in Peace according to thy Word; for mine Eyes have ſeen thy Salvation, which thou haſt prepared before the Face of all People, a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of thy People Iſrael,* verſ. 29, 30, 31, 32. If God had ſhut out the greateſt Part of Mankind by an Abſolute Decree from Eternity, from receiving any Advantage thereby? How are they good Tydings of great Joy to ſuch, who are barr'd the Benefit by the aforeſaid Decree?

QUERY 41. Why ſhould Jeſus declare of the great Love of God, as in *John* 3. 16, 17, 18. And ſay, *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever* (Mark he ſaith whoſoever) *believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have Everlaſting Life; for God ſent not his Son into the World to Condemn the World, but that the World through him might be ſaved; he that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God*: If the Doctrine of Abſolute Predeſtination be true? For here we may ſee Condemnation is pronounc'd by our Lord, becauſe of Mens Unbelief; Chriſt doth not ſay, God's Abſolute Decree from Eternity hath made it impoſſible for the greateſt part of Mankind, to have Everlaſting Life, but they that believe not on him, whom God had ſent; but if we ſhould ſay God's Decree hath made it impoſſible; will it not be a direct Contradicting of Chriſt?

QUERY 42. Do not we read alſo in *Acts* 10. 34, 35. that *Peter* ſpoke expreſly con-

concerning acceptance with God, upon Conditions, when he ſaid, *Of a Truth I perceive God is no Reſpecter of Perſons: but in every Nation he that feareth him, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted with him?* And then where is the Decree that can hinder Man from Acceptance with God, if he fear him, and work Righteouſneſs?

QUERY 43. Why ſhould the Apoſtle *Paul* ſay to the *Romans*, *As by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation; even ſo by the Righteouſneſs of one, the free Gift came upon all Men unto Juſtification of Life*, Rom. 5. 18. If there had been an Abſolute Decree from Eternity to the contrary? But the Apoſtle ſpeaketh very plainly that the Free Gift came upon all; and what is more free than that which is come upon all? And therefore where is the Abſolute Decree to the contrary?

QUERY 44. Why ſhould the Apoſtle ſay, 1 Cor. 15. 22. *For as in Adam all Die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive?* And if Chriſt died for all that were Dead in *Adam*, then where is the Number decreed for Damnation, or that have

have not the Proffer of Salvation by Chriſt?

QUERY 45. Why ſhould the Apoſtle ſay, *Knowing the Terror of the Lord, we perſwade Men*, 2 Cor. 5. 11. If he had believed there was no Poſſibility of Salvation for the greater part of Mankind? For according to this Predeſtinarian Doctrine, it doth appear there was not; therefore to what purpoſe was it, or is it, to perſwade any? For they who are Elected to Salvation by this Abſolute Decree, ſtand in need of no Perſwaſion; and thoſe that are Predeſtinated to Damnation, it will do them no good; ſo according to this Doctrine, the Apoſtle's Labour ſeems to be in vain.

QUERY 46. Moreover why ſhould the Apoſtle be ſo fervent to Preach the Word of God, *Coloſ.* 1. 28. ſaying, *Whom we Preach, warning every Man; and teaching every Man in all Wiſdom, that we may preſent every Man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus*, if God had made Salvation impoſſible to the greater part of Mankind, by an Abſolute Decree from Eternity?

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QUERY 47. Furthermore, why ſhould the Apoſtle *Paul* ſay, 1 *Tim.* 2. 1, 2, 3, 4. *I exhort therefore that Supplications, Prayers,* &c. *be made for all Men*; but that he affirmed it to be *good and acceptable in the Sight of God our Saviour, who will have all Men to be ſaved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth?* Where then is the Abſolute Decree?

QUERY 48. Why did the Apoſtle *Peter* ſay, *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his Promiſe (as ſome Men count Slackneſs) but long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance*, 2 Pet. 3. 9. If there had been an Abſolute Decree from Eternity, of Predeſtinating ſome to Damnation, as according to this Doctrine, ſome are ſo predeſtinated? Now whether did the Apoſtle ſpeak Truth, Yea, or Nay? who plainly declared, that it is not Gods Will, *That any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance?* Therefore conſider what kind of Doctrine that is, which giveth God and Chriſt the Contradiction, as well as the Holy Prophets, and Apoſtles; Openeth a door of Careleſneſs and Security to ſome, and maketh the Coming of Chriſt,

and

and the Preaching of the Gospel wholly useless and ineffectual to others. O that the Vail of Ignorance and Blindness, that is upon the Minds of the Maintainers of this Doctrine, were taken off, that they might come to see the Glory of the Pure Evangelical Doctrine and Ministry, wherein the Love of God is held forth to all the Sons and Daughters of Men, upon their Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, *who tasted Death for every Man*, Heb. 2. 9. And *is the Propitiation for our Sins; and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the whole World*, 1 John 2. 2. The *Light*, the *Way*, the *Truth*, the *Life*, and besides whom, *there is no Saviour*.

Shatton the 3d Month, 1704.

BEHOLD I stand at the Door, and knock; if any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will Sup with him, and he with me, Revel. 3. 20.

And the Spirit and the Bride say, come. And let him that heareth, say, come. And let him that is a Thirst, come; And whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely, Rev. 22. 17.

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